SOCIAL SCIENCE AND MARRIED WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN POST-WAR BRITAIN*

What does paid work mean to women and how have those meanings changed over time? Between the mid 1940s and early 1970s, social science, particularly the emerging discipline of sociology, placed this question at the centre of public debates about change and continuity in British women's lives. These decades witnessed important developments affecting women across social classes: marriage became more or less universal and took place earlier, while families shrank in size and were completed in a shorter space of time. Free universal secondary education and healthcare did not eliminate social inequalities, but it did improve educational opportunities for girls and the health and longevity of older women.[1] Perhaps most striking of all, and integrally linked to these wider trends, was the growth in the proportion of married women in paid work. Between the wars, only 10 per cent of wives were formally employed outside the home; this had more than doubled by 1951, rose to 35 per cent in 1961 and stood at 49 per cent a decade later.[2] As a proportion of the female workforce, married women's share grew from 16 per cent in 1931 to nearly 45 per cent at the beginning of the 1950s, and in 1957 passed the 50 per cent mark.[3] The tendency for young wives to work until the birth of their first child rather than resigning upon marriage accounted for some of this

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[*] I should like to thank Jon Lawrence, and seminar audiences at the universities of Cambridge, Keele, Northwestern and York, for their invaluable feedback on earlier versions of this article.

[1] Pat Thane, 'Towards Equal Opportunities? Women in Britain since 1945', in Terry Gourvish and Alan O'Day (eds.), *Britain since 1945* (Basingstoke, 1991).

[2] Jane Lewis, *Women in Britain since 1945* (Oxford, 1992), 65. The true post-war figures were probably even higher, as census data continued to under-report women's part-time employment: see Viola Klein, *Britain's Married Women Workers* (London, 1965), 25.

[3] The figure for 1931 is from Miriam Glucksmann, *Women Assemble: Women Workers in the New Industries in Inter-War Britain* (London, 1990), 42. The post-war figures are based on Ministry of Labour data, which counted part-time employment more accurately than the census.

Past and Present, no. 233 (Nov. 2016) © The Past and Present Society, Oxford, 2016

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doi:10.1093/pastj/gtw035

growth, but more significant were the older mothers re-entering the workforce after a period of full-time housewifery.[4]

How British women's lives were changing as a consequence of these new demographic facts and socio-economic trends became a regular theme in popular post-war discourses of gender. Social science, as this article seeks to demonstrate, had a major hand in framing the public meanings of the shifting female life-course, and particularly in making sense of the phenomenon of married women's work. Researchers such as Viola Klein, Pearl Jephcott, Judith Hubback, Ferdynand Zweig, Nancy Seear and Hannah Gavron produced a body of sociological writings on this subject in the 1950s and 1960s that had purchase beyond the confines of professional social science. They helped to entrench new understandings of married women's employment as a fundamental feature of advanced industrial societies, and one that solved the dilemmas of 'modern' woman across social classes. Central to their vision was the 'dual role' in which women, having worked before becoming mothers, re-entered the workforce, often on a part-time basis, once their children were of school age or older. This model, they argued, met women's new social and psychic needs for interests outside the home as well as their material aspirations for a higher standard of living. This 'in–out' model, as Viola Klein described it, balanced the needs of mothers against those of children and husbands, and released an untapped and much needed source of labour for the economy.

These researchers and their ideas have not been wholly neglected, but the significance of their collective contribution has been inadequately understood. Texts like *Women's Two Roles* (1956), which Klein co-authored with the Swedish social scientist Alva Myrdal, and Jephcott's *Married Women Working* (1962) are frequently cited by historians as sources that illuminate women's changing post-war lives, but critical analysis of how those texts were produced and consumed, and of their wider impact, has been limited.[5] Greatest attention has centred on placing these

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[4] Thane, 'Towards Equal Opportunities?', 195.

[5] See, for example, Dolly Smith Wilson, 'A New Look at the Affluent Worker: The Good Working Mother in Post-War Britain', *Twentieth-Century British History*, xvii (2006), which extensively cites these texts as primary sources. A partial exception is Jane Lewis's discussion in 'Myrdal, Klein, *Women's Two Roles* and Postwar Feminism', in Harold L. Smith (ed.), *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century* (Aldershot, 1990).

sociologists within longer trajectories of Western feminist thought. Scholars writing in the 1970s and 1980s emphasized what they saw as the ideological forces constraining critical gender analysis in the preceding decades, which, as a result, failed to challenge the norms of continuous maternal care and gender-differentiated marital roles.[6] According to Elizabeth Wilson, the dual role left the sexual division of labour undisturbed, instead presenting women with a 'false image' that functioned 'ideologically to mesh their new role in the workforce with their continuing responsibilities as mothers and housewives'.[7] More recent accounts, by contrast, argue for continuity between the feminism of the 1950s and 1960s and the radical politics that followed. Ann Taylor Allen, for example, locates Myrdal, Klein and Jephcott in a wider group of European researchers who, by investigating women's experiences and feelings, 'laid the foundation for a new feminist movement that would declare that "the personal is the political"'.[8]

This article takes a different approach. It conceptualizes the post-war sociologists of women not as neutral observers of change nor as neglected feminist intellectuals, but as important agents in social and cultural histories of gender. The argument unfolds in three parts. First, by exploring the interconnected lives and ideas of this group, the article asks how and where social-scientific knowledge about women and paid work was produced in the 1950s and 1960s. It shows how a pre-war tradition of social investigation that conceptualized women's labour almost exclusively in relation to household survival was transformed into a sociology of women with questions of motivation and personal fulfilment to the fore. The personal and professional experiences of the individual researchers were integral to this opening up of new intellectual problems. So too was their location on the margins of professional sociology, which was preoccupied in this period with questions of masculine social mobility and the impact of affluence on working-class family and community.[9]

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[6] Birmingham Feminist History Group, 'Feminism as Femininity in the Nineteen-Fifties?', *Feminist Review*, iii (1979); Elizabeth Wilson, *Only Half-Way to Paradise: Women in Postwar Britain, 1945–1968* (London, 1980); Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (London, 1974).

[7] Wilson, *Only Half-Way to Paradise*, 59: a point reiterated less polemically in Karen Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700–1950: A Political History* (Stanford, 2000), 392.

[8] Ann Taylor Allen, *Feminism and Motherhood in Western Europe, 1890–1970: The Maternal Dilemma* (New York, 2005), 214. See also Shira Tarrant, *When Sex Became Gender* (London, 2006); E. Stina Lyon, 'Viola Klein: Forgotten Émigré Intellectual, Public Sociologist and Advocate of Women', *Sociology*, xli (2007); Jessica Thurlow, 'Continuity and Change in British Feminism, *c.*1940–1960' (Univ. of Michigan Ph.D. thesis, 2006); Thane, 'Towards Equal Opportunities?', 199.

Secondly, the article asks what happened to this knowledge when it left the realms of professional social science. It shows how ideas about the dual role were widely disseminated in the broadsheet and tabloid press, but were often reconfigured in the process.[10] As Adrian Bingham has observed, newspapers are by their nature 'multivalent' entities which provide platforms for a variety of complex and often contradictory viewpoints, and which rarely contain coherent, sustained messages about gender.[11] Here sociological ideas collided with pre-war, class-based understandings of married women's labour as the product of economic pressure, as well as post-war anxieties about children's emotional well-being. But, bolstered by the authority of conveying 'facts' rather than airing 'prejudices', the effect of the new sociological narrative was to dampen the moralizing tone of much public debate about working mothers. It helped to reframe what had been understood as a social problem stemming from the unemployment, incapacity or absence of a male breadwinner into a sociological fact rooted in women's material aspirations and social and psychic needs.

Thirdly, the article moves beyond the analysis of popular discourses to offer two examples in which this sociological knowledge gained direct purchase with different sets of actors, and with different effects. The first is the close collaboration between Viola Klein and the British Federation of University

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[9] Mike Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain since 1940: The Politics of Method* (Oxford, 2010); Jon Lawrence, 'Social-Science Encounters and the Negotiation of Difference in Early 1960s England', *History Workshop Journal*, lxxvii (2014).

[10] Analysis of press coverage was conducted through keyword searches of digital newspaper archives encompassing some of the most popular tabloids as well as the broadsheet press and political weeklies. The following titles were consulted: *Daily Express*, *Sunday Express*, *Daily Mirror*, *Daily Star*, *Manchester Guardian*, *Observer*, *Times*, *Economist*, *Spectator*. In addition, use was made of the extensive collections of press clippings in the papers of Viola Klein (University of Reading, Special Collections, Viola Klein Papers; hereafter VK) and Judith Hubback (Women's Library, London School of Economics (hereafter WL, LSE), Papers of Judith Hubback).

[11] Adrian Bingham, *Gender, Modernity, and the Popular Press in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford, 2004).

Women (BFUW), which embraced the dual role model enthusiastically and, alongside other professional women's bodies, directed much of its energies in the 1960s towards campaigning for training opportunities and flexible working patterns for older women seeking re-employment. The second case reveals how, in the very different setting of Whitehall, the studies of Klein, Jephcott and Zweig were interpreted in such a way as to entrench further a long-standing policy of minimal state investment in nursery provision rooted in a set of assumptions about the informal care economy of the working-class family and community.

This analysis contributes to the more nuanced history of the role of the human and social sciences in the making of modern Western societies that has been emerging in recent years through the work of Peter Mandler, Mike Savage, Erik Linstrum and others.[12] These approaches puncture meta-narratives of 'colonial knowledge' abroad and 'social control' at home by demonstrating how the quest to study and understand human societies frequently stood in tension with such hegemonic ideological projects, even when explicitly sponsored or fostered by them. As will become clear, the body of ideas studied here cannot be easily elided with the functionalist orthodoxies that dominated sociological research on the family before the feminist invasion of the academy in the 1970s.[13] It is true that these researchers never seriously questioned the sexual division of domestic labour or 'Bowlbyist' dictates about the care of under-threes, and much of their optimistic faith in the dual role solution would be confounded by destabilizing social and economic change in the 1970s and beyond. Nonetheless, they took women seriously as a subject of sociological knowledge and conceptualized their interests as distinct from those of children and husbands. They were not all-powerful experts imperiously proclaiming truths about women, but individuals located on the margins of professional social science who were often grappling with their own 'feminine dilemmas'. Their ideas, as we shall see, gained real traction and helped to reframe the terms of debate about married women's work in post-war Britain, but often in ways that they did not foresee or necessarily intend.

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[12] Peter Mandler, *Return from the Natives: How Margaret Mead Won the Second World War and Lost the Cold War* (New Haven, 2013); Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain*; Erik Linstrum, 'The Politics of Psychology in the British Empire, 1898–1960', *Past and Present*, no. 215 (May 2012). See also Selina Todd, 'Family Welfare and Social Work in Post-War England, *c.* 1948–*c.* 1970', *English Historical Review*, cxxix (2014); Lise Butler, 'Michael Young, the Institute of Community Studies and the Politics of Kinship', *Twentieth Century British History*, xxvi (2015).

[13] The charge levelled by Veronica Beechey in 'Women and Production: A Critical Analysis of Some Sociological Theories of Women's Work', in Annette Kuhn and Ann Marie Wolpe (eds.), *Feminism and Materialism* (London, 1978).

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Most public knowledge about women's work in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Britain was the result of social investigation of one kind or another. Royal commissions, poverty surveys, the reports of medical officers and factory inspectors, and the inquiries of bodies like the Women's Industrial Council shaped the collective, official meanings of women's labour.[14] Much of this investigation set out to diagnose social problems and prescribe social remedies, and was thus little concerned with recovering women's subjective experiences of paid work. Sensitive middle-class observers, such as Clara Collet and Clementina Black, noted the complex domestic circumstances of many women workers and the variety of employment patterns across regions and occupations.[15] Nonetheless, like other investigators, they framed their subject around the primary organizing themes of household survival and the contribution that women's earnings made to family incomes. Married women's labour was, in this setting, typically problematized as an 'evil' resulting from the incapacity, unemployment or absence of a male breadwinner, or from long-established 'customs' that obtained in particular industries, such as the Lancashire cotton mills or the Dundee jute works. The employment of married women thus became an object of policy debate — concerning infant mortality, protective legislation, industrial welfare, male wages and trade unionism — in which professional expertise was routinely invoked on either side.[16] Married women workers remained no less problematic for social policy makers during the inter-war decades, becoming entangled in controversies over equal pay, family allowances and male unemployment.[17]

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[14] For a flavour of this literature, see Royal Commission on Labour, *The Employment of Women: Reports by Miss Eliza Orme, Miss Clara E. Collet, Miss May E. Abraham and Miss Margaret H. Irwin* (London, 1893); Adelaide Anderson, 'Memorandum on Employment of Mothers in Factories and Workshops', in *Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration*, 3 vols. (London, 1904), i, appendix V.

[15] Clara E. Collet, *Women in Industry* (London, [1911]); Clementina Black (ed.), *Married Women's Work: Being the Report of an Enquiry Undertaken by the Women's Industrial Council* (London, 1915).

This mode of seeing married women's employment as a 'social problem' began to change in the 1940s, when the demand for female labour during and immediately after the Second World War brought the question of women's feelings about paid work to the attention of government. As Daniel Ussishkin has shown, concerns about the relationship between industrial productivity and worker morale stimulated interest in the psychology of the workplace more generally in this period.[18] Women, however, presented a special case, because their existing or future responsibilities as wives and mothers produced, as practically every writer on the subject agreed, a weaker orientation towards paid work. As the economist Gertrude Williams put it, for most women, paid work represented 'the unimportant preliminary to the real business of life', which was marriage and homemaking.[19] If women, and particularly married women, were to be persuaded to join or stay in the labour market, these attitudes needed to be better understood. This was Geoffrey Thomas's objective in the autumn of 1943, when he sent a team from the Wartime Social Survey to interview 2,609 women working in industry about their post-war employment intentions.[20] Thomas oversaw a further study of women's attitudes towards paid work in 1947, prompted by the underwhelming response to the Ministry of Labour's campaign to recruit female workers to industry against the backdrop of pressing post-war labour shortages.[21] The progressive research organization Mass Observation also explored women's subjective feelings about war work and post-war employment in numerous file reports, directives and publications, including its book *The Journey Home*, published in 1944.[22]

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[16] Carol Dyhouse, 'Working-Class Mothers and Infant Mortality in England, 1895–1914', *Journal of Social History*, xii (1978); Barbara Harrison, *Not Only the 'Dangerous Trades': Women's Work and Health in Britain, 1880–1914* (London, 1996).

[17] Susan Pedersen, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State: Britain and France, 1914–1945* (Cambridge, 1993); Sally Alexander, 'Men's Fears and Women's Work: Responses to Unemployment in London between the Wars', *Gender and History*, xii (2000).

[18] Daniel Ussishkin, 'The "Will to Work": Industrial Management and the Question of Conduct in Inter-War Britain', in Laura Beers and Geraint Thomas (eds.), *Brave New World: Imperial and Democratic Nation-Building in Britain between the Wars* (London, 2011); Daniel Ussishkin, 'Morale and the Postwar Politics of Consensus', *Journal of British Studies*, lii (2013).

[19] Gertrude Williams, *Women and Work* (London, 1945), 114.

[20] Geoffrey Thomas, *Women at Work: The Attitudes of Working Women toward Post-War Employment and Some Related Problems* (London, 1944).

The picture painted by these studies was conservative, pointing to a widespread and deeply felt desire among women for a life of conventional, full-time domesticity following the upheavals of war. Denise Riley and Penny Summerfield have both questioned the simplistic interpretation by contemporaries of this survey data, suggesting that women's stated desires appear far more ambiguous and contingent when considered in the light of concerns about jobs for returning soldiers and the winding down of the war nurseries.[23] Nonetheless, as Riley describes, these surveys were read as though they supplied evidence 'of essential truths about social organization and the sexual division of labour', and she further suggests that this 'indifference to the complexity of work choices' was a legacy reproduced in the sociology of the 1950s and 1960s.[24] Riley was undoubtedly right about the contribution that texts like *The Journey Home* made to the pro-natalist moment of the mid to late 1940s, when gender roles were reinscribed in social welfare policy and the 'normal' family was institutionalized as one containing a male breadwinner and dependent housewife and

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[21] Geoffrey Thomas, *Women and Industry: An Inquiry in to the Problem of Recruiting Women to Industry Carried Out for the Ministry of Labour and National Service* (London, 1949); William Crofts, *Coercion or Persuasion? Propaganda in Britain after 1945* (London, 1989); Susan L. Carruthers, 'Manning the Factories: Propaganda and Policy on the Employment of Women, 1939–47', *History*, lxxv (1990); Catherine Blackford, 'The Best of Both Worlds? Women's Employment in Post-War Britain', in Jim Fyrth (ed.), *Labour's High Noon: The Government and the Economy, 1945–51* (London, 1993).

[22] All the following were published by Mass Observation and may be found in the Mass-Observation Archive, Sussex University: Directive, Jan. 1944; 'Female Attitudes to Compulsion', File Report 919, Oct. 1941; 'Women in Industry', File Report 1163, Mar. 1942; 'Appeals to Women', File Report 1238, May 1942; 'Do the Factory Girls Want to Stay Put or Go Home?', File Report 2059, Mar. 1944; *The Journey-Home: A Report Prepared by Mass Observation for the Advertising Service Guild* (London, 1944). See also Mass-Observation, *People in Production: An Enquiry into British War Production* (London, 1942); *War Factory: A Report by Mass-Observation* (London, 1943).

[23] Denise Riley, *War in the Nursery: Theories of the Child and Mother* (London, 1983); Penny Summerfield, *Women Workers in the Second World War: Production and Patriarchy in Conflict* (London, 1984), 189.

[24] Riley, *War in the Nursery*, 149.

children.[25] But she is certainly wrong if we assume that the latter part of her claim extends to the post-war sociology of women.[26] This, on the contrary, produced very rich accounts of women's orientations to paid work that were located in larger framing questions about the changing conditions of women's lives in self-consciously 'modern' societies.

This shift is well demonstrated by Richard Titmuss's lecture of 1952 entitled 'The Position of Women', subsequently published in his *Essays on 'the Welfare State'*, in which he suggests that demographic changes and growing affluence placed British women in a fundamentally 'new situation':

> With an expectation of another thirty-five to forty years of life at the age of forty, with the responsibilities of child upbringing nearly fulfilled, with so many more alternative ways of spending money, with new opportunities and outlets in the field of leisure, the question of the rights of women to an emotionally satisfying and independent life appears in a new guise.[27]

Titmuss, then head of the Department of Social Administration at the London School of Economics (LSE), was sufficiently intrigued by his observation to seek and secure a large grant from the Department for Scientific and Industrial Research in 1956 for a study of married women workers in Bermondsey, south London. He was not, however, sufficiently intrigued to conduct the research himself, delegating the task to a team of researchers led initially by Nancy Seear, a lecturer in personnel management, and subsequently by Pearl Jephcott, a former youth worker and author of several well-received studies of the lives and problems of working-class girls. By the time the final report, *Married Women Working*, was published in 1962, a sizeable body of sociological literature on women, family and work had come into being.[28] One of the earliest texts to appear was Ferdynand

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[25] On which subject, see also Pedersen, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State*, 336–56; Stephanie Spencer, *Gender, Work and Education in Britain in the 1950s* (Basingstoke, 2005), ch. 2.

[26] Riley unhelpfully does not specify which sociological literature she has in mind. It might be that her reference was to the Parsonian functionalism of much post-war sociology of the family, which would make her claim more plausible.

[27] Richard M. Titmuss, *Essays on 'the Welfare State'* (London, 1958), 102.

[28] Pearl Jephcott with Nancy Seear and John H. Smith, *Married Women Working* (London, 1962). In 1959 a team from the University of Leicester led by Ilya Neustadt, with the help of Titmuss and Seear, secured funding from the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research for a 'sister' study of married women workers in a Leicester hosiery factory. The research was completed but produced just one publication: R. K. Brown, J. M. Kirkby and K. F. Taylor, 'The Employment of Married Women and the Supervisory Role', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, ii (1964). For more on this

(cont. on p. 278)

Zweig's *Women's Life and Labour* (1952), a study based on 445 interviews with women, supervisors and employers across a variety of industries.[29] Two years later, Judith Hubback's postal survey of women graduates was published by the think-tank Political and Economic Planning (PEP) as *Graduate Wives*, and in 1957 Hubback published a book-length version, *Wives Who Went to College*.[30] The year before, Alva Myrdal and Viola Klein's *Women's Two Roles: Home and Work* had appeared, rooted in comparative analysis of women's paid work in Britain, France, Sweden and the United States.[31] Other notable texts from the 1960s included Hannah Gavron's *Captive Wife*, Klein's sole-authored *Britain's Married Women Workers*, Seear's *A Career for Woman in Industry?* and *Graduate Women at Work*, a study carried out by the BFUW to which Klein contributed a chapter.[32]

This body of research did not constitute a school of thought. These researchers arrived at their subject from different biographical and intellectual trajectories. Jephcott (1900–80) and Seear (1913–97) had pursued pre-war careers in youth work and industrial welfare respectively, and both were unmarried, childless, middle-aged women at the time of the Bermondsey study. The daughter of a successful mining

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'lost' study, see Henrietta O'Connor and John Goodwin, 'Revisiting Norbert Elias's Sociology of Community: Learning from the Leicester Restudies', *Sociological Review*, lx (2012).

[29] Ferdynand Zweig, *Women's Life and Labour* (London, 1952).

[30] Political and Economic Planning, *Graduate Wives* (London, 1954); Judith Hubback, *Wives Who Went to College* (London, 1957).

[31] Alva Myrdal and Viola Klein, *Women's Two Roles: Home and Work* (London, 1956).

[32] Hannah Gavron, *The Captive Wife: Conflicts of Housebound Mothers* (London, 1966); Klein, *Britain's Married Women Workers*; Nancy Seear, Veronica Roberts and John Brock, *A Career for Women in Industry?* (Edinburgh, 1964); Constance E. Arregger (ed.), *Graduate Women at Work: A Study by a Working Party of the British Federation of University Women* (Newcastle, 1966). Other studies could be added here, such as R. Keith Kelsall's major survey for the Board of Education *Women in Teaching: Report on an Independent Nuffield Survey Following-Up a Large National Sample of Women Who Entered Teaching in England and Wales at Various Dates Pre-War and Post-War* (London, 1963) and Margot Jefferys, 'Married Women in the Higher Grades of the Civil Service and Government Sponsored Research Organisations', *British Journal of Sociology*, iii (1952). See also Simon Yudkin and Anthea Holme, *Working Mothers and their Children: A Study for the Council for Children's Welfare* (London, 1963), which, although prompted by a concern with children, offers a rich sociological picture of married women's work.

engineer, Seear studied history at Cambridge and industrial psychology and law at the LSE before finding employment at Clark's, the shoe-manufacturing firm, where her experience of managing a substantial female workforce nurtured an academic interest in women's work.[33] Jephcott, another history graduate (in her case of Aberystwyth), came to the subject via her career in organizing girls' clubs; it was this work that inspired the three studies of employment, leisure and family in the lives of working-class girls that she authored in the 1940s.[34]

Although belonging to the same generation, Alva Myrdal (1902–86), by contrast, approached the theme from her perspective as a prominent Swedish public intellectual married to the economist and social democrat politician Gunnar Myrdal and best known in Britain for her work on population policy, *Nation and Family* (1940).[35] Well-educated, ambitious and mother of three children, Myrdal's personal (and not altogether happy) experience of balancing career and family heavily shaped her ideas about the dual role, which she developed with the Austrian-born Viola Klein (1908–73).[36] Klein was the author of *The Feminine Character* (1946), an analysis of how sex differences had been conceptualized by thinkers across the social and human sciences, based on the doctoral thesis that she had completed under Karl Mannheim at LSE during the war.[37] By her own account, Klein's subject choice was driven by a general interest in the stereotyping of 'outgroups', in which she included 'foreigners', 'Jews' and 'negroes' alongside women.[38] As Stina Lyon notes, however, Klein's contribution to *Women's Two Roles* and subsequent work suggests she shared Myrdal's concern about the limited employment opportunities for women in middle age (although, unlike Myrdal, Klein was unmarried and childless).[39]

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[33] 'Baroness Beatrice Nancy Seear, interviewed by Betty Scharf', transcript: WL, LSE, National Life Story Collection, 8NLS/04/4.

[34] Pearl Jephcott, *Girls Growing Up* (London, 1942); Agnes Pearl Jephcott, *Clubs for Girls* (London, 1943); Pearl Jephcott, *Rising Twenty: Notes on Some Ordinary Girls* (London, 1948).

[35] Alva Myrdal, *Nation and Family: The Swedish Experiment in Democratic Family and Population Policy* (New York, 1941). The Fabian Society's submission to the Royal Commission on Population, republished as *Population and the People: A National Policy* (London, 1945), was strongly influenced by Myrdal's work.

[36] See Sissela Bok, *Alva Myrdal: A Daughter's Memoir* (Reading, Mass., 1991), 227–8.

[37] For the most detailed biographical sketch of Klein, see Jane Sayers, 'Introduction', in Viola Klein, *The Feminine Character: History of an Ideology*, 3rd edn (London, 1989).

[38] Klein, *Feminine Character*, 4.

The stories of Judith Hubback (1917–2006) and Hannah Gavron (1936–65) were different again. Both were graduate mothers with young children when they pursued their research, Hubback effectively self-funding her postal survey and Gavron working towards a Ph.D. at Bedford College, London, before her death by suicide in 1965. Like Myrdal, Hubback and Gavron sought to work out their own personal dilemmas through social science, although their intellectual formations were very different. The wife of a civil servant, Hubback grew up in an upper-middle-class, liberal-minded family, studied history at Cambridge and first ventured into social research when analysing replies to a survey of working-class housewives initiated by her mother-in-law and leading figure of the Eugenics Society, Eva Hubback, following the latter's death in 1949.[40] Born in Israel, Gavron was the daughter of Toscoe Fyvel, a prominent left-wing Zionist, literary editor of *Tribune* and close friend of George Orwell. She was educated at a progressive co-educational school, trained briefly at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and completed her bachelor of arts and postgraduate work at Bedford College as a young wife and mother, while also writing regularly for the literary section of the social science weekly *New Society*.[41]

Ferdynand Zweig (1896–1988) was born in Poland, but details of his personal and family life are difficult to establish.[42] Of all these researchers, his interest in women is hardest to place. A trained economist, he moved to Britain in the 1940s as an adviser to the Polish government-in-exile. He subsequently lectured in the wartime Polish Faculty of Law at Oxford and went on to develop a public profile as a sociologist of the British working class, publishing three studies of working-class men between 1948 and 1952.[43] This theme connected his work to the concerns of post-war researchers like Brian Jackson, Dennis Marsden and Peter Willmott, all deeply absorbed in the 'male melodrama of the upwardly mobile', which Mike Savage sees as an animating dynamic of much sociological fieldwork in this period.[44] Yet Zweig's preoccupation with women in *Women's Life and Labour* — and particularly with women in paid work — set him apart from this group, as did his foreignness and his idiosyncratic research methods and prose style, which were frequently remarked upon disparagingly by reviewers.[45]

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[39] Lyon, 'Viola Klein'.

[40] Judith Hubback, *From Dawn to Dusk: Autobiography* (Wilmette, Ill., 2003). Hubback published the findings anonymously in 'An Inquiry among Housewives: Many Grievances and Much Contentment', *Manchester Guardian*, 21 Sept. 1950, 5.

[41] See the memoir of her youngest son, Jeremy Gavron, *A Woman on the Edge of Time: A Son's Search for his Mother* (Melbourne, 2015).

[42] He was married to Dora Zweig and had one daughter, Eva, born in November 1930. No mention is made of Dora in any of Zweig's published works, although the acknowledgements in *Women's Life and Labour* reveal that Eva helped with some of the fieldwork. Father and daughter were both naturalized in 1948; see naturalization certificate: The National Archives, London (hereafter TNA), HO 334/234/4293.

Zweig's contribution to the burgeoning sociology of women complicates any simple narrative of patriarchy working systematically to marginalize female researchers in post-war British social science. In her memoir *Father and Daughter*, Ann Oakley describes how her father, Richard Titmuss, hired a new cadre of male social policy researchers at the LSE who gradually displaced the older, feminized social work tradition represented by figures such as Pearl Jephcott: 'She, like some of the other women in this story', Oakley writes, 'was a missed opportunity for the male academic establishment, but, then, missing such opportunities is part-and-parcel of how it constitutes itself'.[46] There can be no doubt that studying and writing about women was an unlikely route to professional success within British social science in these decades; it is surely no coincidence that of this group only Klein secured a permanent academic post, and in her case not until 1964, when she was in her fifties.[47] Yet the post-war

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[43] *Directory of Simon Visiting Professors and Fellows, 1944–1970* (Manchester, 1972), 262–3. The three studies were Ferdynand Zweig, *Men in the Pits* (London, 1948); Ferdynand Zweig, *Labour, Life and Poverty* (London, 1948); Ferdynand Zweig, *The British Worker* (London, 1952).

[44] Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain*, 186.

[45] See, for example, reviews of *Women's Life and Labour* and *The British Worker*, in *Economist*, 3 May 1952, 314; 28 June 1952, 884. See also Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain*, 166 n. 4.

[46] Ann Oakley, *Father and Daughter: Patriarchy, Gender and Social Science* (Bristol, 2014), 120.

[47] She was appointed lecturer in the Department of Sociology at the University of Reading. Jephcott never secured a permanent post and Gavron was turned down twice for jobs at the LSE. Hubback retrained as a psychoanalyst, aware that an academic career was unlikely. For a more general overview of women's marginal position in professional sociology, see Helen Roberts and Diane Woodward, 'Changing

(cont. on p. 282)

sociologists of women were not condemned to intellectual or public obscurity. As will become clear, their ideas about women, family and work gained serious purchase beyond social-scientific circles; in Klein and Hubback's cases, lack of secure employment may partly explain why they worked so hard to publicize their research to wider audiences. But what exactly were these ideas?

II

Despite their disparate biographies, the work produced by this group was lent unity by a set of shared or overlapping organizing themes. The first was historical. Myrdal, Klein and Gavron all conceptualized women's position in modern societies as the product of a long process of historical evolution dating from the onset of industrialization, when the household economy was replaced by a system of waged labour taking male breadwinners out of the home. Drawing on classic works by Dorothy George, Ivy Pinchbeck and Alice Clark, *Women's Two Roles* framed the early nineteenth century as a moment of dispossession, when women were stripped of their economic function and placed in a state of stunted social and psychological development. 'A resolute minority', Myrdal and Klein noted, 'thrust out into the world of business and public affairs' by turning their backs on domesticity, but for the vast majority of women, the 'world was bounded by the walls of their home'.[48] The demographic shifts, technological advances and social trends of the mid twentieth century now offered women an opportunity, in Klein's words, to 'recover their share in the economic system' by embracing continuous paid employment over the life-course, broken only by a short period for childbearing.[49] 'In this sense', wrote Hannah Gavron in a similar vein, 'the problem of the working wife and mother is of fairly recent origin'. Only now, in the era of early marriage, small families and healthy middle age, had 'the married woman attempted to combine home and work simultaneously'.[50]

(n. 47 cont.)
Patterns of Women's Employment in Sociology: 1950–80', *British Journal of Sociology*, xxxii (1981).

[48] Myrdal and Klein, *Women's Two Roles*, p. xvi.

[49] Klein, *Feminine Character*, 36. See also Klein, *Britain's Married Women Workers*, 18.

[50] Gavron, *Captive Wife*, 31.

This sense of the mid twentieth century as a moment of new possibility for women was frequently framed in global terms and linked to larger narratives of modernization. The subject of the 'dual function of women', Myrdal and Klein argued, had 'universal application', because social and economic development would inevitably throw up similar questions about family and work wherever it took place.[51] *Women's Two Roles* was explicitly conceptualized as a comparative study rooted in analysis of women's status across the developed world. It mined information produced by government agencies and international bodies such as the International Labour Organization, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and UNESCO, and synthesized a growing body of global social science scholarship. Klein developed an extensive international network of interlocutors who were engaged on similar research into women's changing family and working lives. This included the authors of *Womanpower* (a major study published in 1957 by the (United States) National Manpower Council), the German sociologist Elizabeth Pfeil, and collaborators in the Soviet bloc, where Klein travelled in 1961 to participate in what she described as 'an East–West meeting of sociologists and social scientists' on the theme of family and industrialization.[52]

As well as a global trend, women's new orientation to work and family was understood as a cross-class phenomenon. This was not a narrative of converging middle- and working-class lifestyles under the conditions of affluence, a theme much debated in post-war British sociology.[53] In empirical terms, these studies varied in their focus: Zweig and Jephcott investigated the lives of working-class women; Hubback dealt mainly with middle-class wives and mothers; Klein and Gavron incorporated both. But what they held in common was an assumption about the psychic needs that paid work now met for women of all social classes in the absence of economic pressure. This latter factor was, according to Jephcott, what separated the working-class wives of the 1950s from their mothers' generation; Bermondsey mothers earned in order to 'improve on the improvements', to buy 'extras' for their

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[51] Myrdal and Klein, *Women's Two Roles*, p. xvii.

[52] Viola Klein to Douglas Schneider, 18 Mar. 1960: VK, 15/3.

[53] Lawrence, 'Social-Science Encounters and the Negotiation of Difference in Early 1960s England'.

families and themselves in the form of clothes, toys and holidays rather than to keep a roof over their heads.[54] But Jephcott recognized that financial motives did not capture the 'deeper reasons' why married working-class women worked.[55] Material aspirations might supply the pretext and most readily available justification for seeking work, but they could not provide an adequate sociological account of the growth in married women's employment.

Klein's explanation in *Britain's Married Women Workers* was that women, like men, had come to regard work as 'a means of self-expression and a condition of personal fulfilment' which corresponded to 'a psychological need'.[56] Here she built on the observation, first made in *Women's Two Roles*, that society had thought too little about the 'psychology of non-participation'.[57] Outside interests, a sense of usefulness, the social and mental stimulus that came from gainful employment: these, Myrdal and Klein argued, were the key to a stable feminine selfhood, particularly for the older woman whose children no longer needed her. Many women at this stage, they noted, 'pass through a phase of acute emotional crisis' leading to deep feelings of inferiority or even nervous breakdown.[58] Hubback was similarly concerned by the cumulative impact of domesticity — 'the pottering, impermanent, trivial, interrupted repetitions which superficially make up so much of the day' — on a woman's sense of herself as an individual. Such women, she wrote, 'are often too self-sacrificing in the sense that they let themselves drift into a state of mind in which their daily lives gradually destroy them as individuals, leaving them only as wives and mothers'.[59]

Jephcott and Zweig developed this idea differently in the context of the working-class wives they observed; their subjects talked less about the intrinsic satisfactions of interesting or responsible paid work which studies of professional women tended to

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[54] Klein made the same observation in *Britain's Married Women Workers*, 38, noting that the wives she surveyed worked as a means of 'increasing their standard of living rather than of keeping the wolf from the door'.

[55] Jephcott, *Married Women Working*, 100.

[56] Klein, *Britain's Married Women Workers*, p. xii.

[57] Myrdal and Klein, *Women's Two Roles*, 30.

[58] *Ibid.*, 38.

[59] Hubback, *Wives Who Went to College*, 150–1.

emphasize.[60] But they dwelt upon the psychological benefits of paid work all the same, Jephcott observing high levels of self-confidence and self-esteem among her Bermondsey informants:

> To be able to hold down a job at all in the competitive outside world was reassuring and something that not every married woman would dare to tackle. How important it sounded to say you '*must go in tomorrow*', to talk of 'my mates', and to refer to rush jobs and overseas orders. Certainly the purposeful walk of the twos and threes of women going to and from work through the Park contrasted strongly with the bored looks of the mothers sitting about with a single child. Merely to be moving in a wider circle than the domestic one was a mark of some distinction since, in a place like Bermondsey, housewives lead a very uniform existence.[61]

Zweig wrote in similar terms of how paid work removed a wife's 'sense of inferiority, often turning into its opposite', and of the reward that came 'from her inside feeling that she lives a life of service, if not outward sacrifice'.[62] He also commented upon the effects of a wife's employment on marital power relations in the working-class home. For Zweig, a woman's ability to earn an independent income meant that 'the whole relationship of husband and wife changes basically'. It altered 'the woman's whole personality. A woman standing firmly on the ground with two strong feet, looking fearlessly into her husband's eye with the recognition of her full contribution, is a being wholly different from the "professional" wife, who takes her master's voice for ultimate wisdom'.[63]

For Jephcott, these dynamics adopted specific forms in a working-class community like Bermondsey, but denoted a wider trend. She was struck by the similar modes of expression found in the cross-class sample of working wives surveyed by Klein in 1960. 'The implication', Jephcott concluded, 'is obvious — that employment outside the home is meeting deep-seated needs which are now felt by women in general in our society'.[64]

III

This represented a major shift from the pre-war tradition of social investigation. Victorian and Edwardian observers of women's labour occasionally remarked upon married women who appeared to 'prefer' factory to home life, a fact they explained in terms of a regrettable habituation to paid work before marriage and a subsequent inability to adjust to the demands of domesticity.[65] There was little sense that married working-class women (as opposed to educated spinsters) might benefit in psychic terms from paid employment. By contrast, the post-war studies explicitly set out to elicit women's subjective feelings: to illuminate, in Gavron's words, 'the respondents' *own* perceptions of their situation', and to assess, in Zweig's, 'what difference going out to work makes to women's mind and behaviour'.[66] In this respect, these texts belong to a larger moment in the history of British social science when, as Mike Savage has recently elucidated, a 'gentlemanly' tradition of research rooted in moral evaluation and visual inspection made way for a 'demoralised' model concerned with the 'abstracted individual articulated as member of a modern rational nation'.[67] By framing the meaning of women's labour in terms of 'deep-seated needs' linked to fundamental and irreversible processes of social change, these researchers transformed the working mother from a social problem produced by individual pathology or a dysfunctional male labour market into an unassailable sociological fact.

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[60] See Arregger (ed.), *Graduate Women at Work*.

[61] Jephcott, *Married Women Working*, 108.

[62] Zweig, *Women's Life and Labour*, 18, 22.

[63] *Ibid.*, 155.

[64] Jephcott, *Married Women Working*, 100–1.

This process of demoralization, however, had limits. It did not stretch to mothers of under-fives, who, it was generally agreed, had an obligation to care for their children full-time. Myrdal and Klein took the view that 'mothers should, as far as possible, take care of their own children during the first years of their lives', while Zweig floated the possibility of a statutory limitation of working hours for mothers of pre-schoolers of six or seven hours a day, so as to safeguard the bringing up of 'healthy and balanced children'.[68] The influence of the new discipline of child psychology, and particularly the theory of maternal deprivation associated with the psychoanalyst John Bowlby, was strongly evident here, although its precepts were not accepted uncritically.[69] Hubback endorsed Bowlby's claims about the close link between maternal care and children's emotional well-being, but argued that it should not follow that a woman's talents must therefore 'be totally submerged by motherhood'.[70] Myrdal and Klein recommended mothers gradually lengthen their period of absence once children had reached the age of three; by the time they were at school, the 'psychological dangers' of paid work would have largely passed.[71] All agreed that the primary challenge was to balance the needs of children against women's entitlement to pursue outside interests, including paid work.

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[65] See, for example, the comments of the factory inspector Hilda Martindale included in Anderson, 'Memorandum on Employment of Mothers in Factories and Workshops', 49.

[66] Gavron, *Captive Wife*, 153; Zweig, *Women's Life and Labour*, 9.

[67] Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain*, 20. See also Mike Savage, 'Elizabeth Bott and the Formation of Modern British Sociology', *Sociological Review*, lvi (2008).

[68] Myrdal and Klein, *Women's Two Roles*, 127; Zweig, *Women's Life and Labour*, 154.

The 'dual role' seemed to offer an ideal solution. As Myrdal and Klein saw it, a period of full-time homemaking while children were young followed by re-entry to the workplace allowed women to enjoy 'the best of both worlds', and released them from having to make 'a fatal decision between irreconcilable alternatives'.[72] Many wives, it was suggested, were already embracing this pattern; Jephcott noted in Bermondsey how relatively few mothers with under-fives worked compared to those with children aged five to fourteen, as well as the high level of part-time and shift-working which fitted in with school hours and holidays.[73] In his later study of affluent factory workers, Zweig found that working wives tended to be older mothers in their thirties and forties: 'Women with babies stay at home', he observed, 'but they come back when the children are at school or are grown up'.[74] Hubback pointed to the expanding numbers of older married women working part-time in nursing, medicine and teaching, although insisted that more opportunities of this kind would be needed to support the more general re-entry of trained women to the workplace.[75]

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[69] For the post-war influence of Bowlbyism, see Michal Shapira, *The War Inside: Psychoanalysis, Total War, and the Making of the Democratic Self in Postwar Britain* (New York, 2013); Mathew Thomson, *Lost Freedom: The Landscape of the Child and the British Post-War Settlement* (Oxford, 2013), ch. 3.

[70] Hubback, *Wives Who Went to College*, 153.

[71] Myrdal and Klein, *Women's Two Roles*, 129.

[72] *Ibid.*, p. xvi.

[73] Jephcott, *Married Women Working*, 96–8.

[74] Ferdynand Zweig, *The Worker in an Affluent Society: Family Life and Industry* (London, 1961), 41.

[75] Hubback, *Wives Who Went to College*, 99–105.

It is important to note which groups the dual role model tended to exclude, namely, single mothers, widows and many women from Commonwealth countries, who frequently worked for pay while their children were very young, usually from economic necessity and often on a full-time basis. These groups formed a minority of the total female workforce, but their numbers were far from negligible; as many as one in five married women workers had children under five in the early 1960s, despite repeated claims by sociologists that this pattern was rare.[76] There were other tensions in the post-war texts, not least their failure to question sexual divisions in the home. These researchers never seriously suggested that men might share the burdens of housework and childcare, pointing instead to the phasing of the female life-course into discrete periods of work and homemaking, supported by more flexible attitudes from employers. From the perspective of post-1970s feminism, their prescriptions seem cautious; but this should not obscure the significance of the moment that produced them: when women were taken seriously as a subject of sociological investigation distinct from the family. This moment, as the remainder of the article seeks to demonstrate, was not confined to professional social science but had a meaning and consequences in the culture beyond it.

IV

Who paid attention to these accounts of women's changing lives? What was their 'throw' in wider discourses of gender in post-war Britain? The readership for sociological texts of this kind was necessarily limited but not insignificant. Books like *Women's Two Roles* and *Married Women Working* were widely reviewed in the press. Hubback's *Wives Who Went to College* received no fewer than eighty-seven reviews in organs ranging from *Good Housekeeping* to *Eugenics Review*, and became the subject of leading articles in *The Times* and *The Economist*. This kind of press coverage, which stretched to the mass circulation tabloids, ensured that audiences who were unlikely to read these books were nonetheless exposed to the ideas contained within them. Zweig's *Women's Life and Labour*, for instance, was the subject of a long feature in the *Daily Mirror* in April 1952, and a few months later the newspaper fulsomely reported his speech on the same subject to the Industrial Welfare Society.[77]

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[76] Yudkin and Holme, *Working Mothers and their Children*, 38.

The cultivation of a wider audience for their ideas was partly accomplished by the researchers themselves. Klein did a great deal of public speaking. The year 1960, for example, saw her addressing the Staff College for Matrons, the Bristol Marriage and Family Guidance Council, the Society of Juvenile Courts Probation Officers, the Rickmansworth and District Federation of the BFUW and the National Society of Children's Nurseries, among various other audiences. As noted earlier, Klein's lack of permanent employment might explain much of this frenetic activity: she always asked for speaking fees and sought commissions from editors to cover her fares for overseas conferences.[78] Her reliance on short-term research contracts before finally securing a lectureship in 1964 was further evidence of her professional marginality. Yet it arguably served to enlarge the audience for her research. The survey of attitudes towards working wives which she carried out after *Women's Two Roles*, for example, was published by the Institute of Personnel Management in 1960, as was her pamphlet on employers' attitudes towards married workers the following year, while in 1964 she compiled a report for the OECD comparing policies in twenty-one countries affecting the status of married women in employment.[79] Judith Hubback actively promoted herself and her work in a not dissimilar way. She persuaded PEP to publish her graduate wives survey in 1954 and to waive their policy of anonymity so as to receive an author credit.[80] She wrote a long piece for the *Manchester Guardian* setting out her findings and gave multiple press interviews on the publication of both the PEP report and later *Wives Who Went to College*.[81] She also appeared in 1958 on the Independent Television current affairs programme *Youth Wants to Know*, answering questions about women's careers from grammar school pupils.[82]

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[77] 'What! My Wife Go Out to Work?', *Daily Mirror*, 28 Apr. 1952, 2; 'The Factory Girls Are So Shy and So Humble, He Says', *Daily Mirror*, 5 July 1952, 6–7.

[78] Klein funded her attendance at the family and industrialization seminar in Yugoslavia this way: see Klein to Nels Anderson at the UNESCO Institute for Social Sciences, 18 Mar., 9 Apr. 1960: VK, 15/3.

[79] Viola Klein, *Working Wives: A Survey of Facts and Opinions concerning the Gainful Employment of Married Women in Britain. Carried Out in Co-operation with Mass Observation Ltd.* (London, 1960); Viola Klein, *Employing Married Women* (London, 1961); Viola Klein, *Women Workers: Working Hours and Services* (Paris, 1965).

[80] Hubback, *From Dusk to Dawn*, 139.

[81] Judith Hubback, 'Some Graduate Wives: Work and Children', *Manchester Guardian*, 10 July 1954.

The relative novelty of their status as women (in some cases mothers) producing research about other women was further explanation for this media attention. The *Hampstead and Highgate Express*, for example, had no doubt that Hubback was newsworthy, reporting with some fanfare how a 'Golders Green woman with three children and a husband to look after conducted a single-handed inquiry into the lives of 1500 women in order to find out what happens to "degree girls" AFTER they get married'.[83] But the main reason why sociological research on married women's employment was so widely reported was undoubtedly the topicality of the subject matter. Gertrude Williams observed in 1966 that it was 'hardly possible to open a periodical or a newspaper without finding something on this topic or correspondence from women who work, or who don't, or who want to and can't'.[84] The scale of the media response to Hubback's PEP report, and later *Wives Who Went To College*, suggests that she had tapped into an important current of popular feeling. The *Times* leader on *Graduate Wives* prompted the publication of fifty letters to the editor over three months, which PEP compiled into a follow-up report entitled *Graduate Wives' Tales*.[85] Klein was overwhelmed by the media coverage generated by her *Working Wives* survey, which encompassed leading articles, features and commentaries across the broadsheets and tabloids, and led to a flurry of invitations for speaking engagements.[86]

This media attention ensured a wide cultural circulation for sociological knowledge about women, but researchers like Klein and Hubback could not always control the meanings constructed from their ideas. Much of the press commentary on *Graduate Wives* and *Wives Who Went to College* reaffirmed Hubback's analysis; her discussion of 'overtiredness' among housewives, for example, was widely praised for drawing attention to a crucial but neglected theme, while many of the *Times* letter writers echoed her frustrations regarding the lack of part-time employment opportunities for graduates and the stultifying effects of a housebound existence.[87] But other reactions were more ambivalent, reading her research against the ideological backdrop of ongoing debates about the value of women's education prompted by John Newsom's notorious report *The Education of Girls* (1948).[88] Some older graduate women took umbrage at the inference that they had somehow 'wasted' their degrees by staying at home and argued instead that their academic training made them better wives, mothers and members of the community.[89] Others accused Hubback of practising elitism through her exclusive focus on graduates. Marjorie Proops in the *Daily Mirror* playfully critiqued Hubback's belief 'that an educated woman is of more value than an uneducated one', asking 'more value to who? (Or is it whom?) To their husbands? Children? The community? Or themselves? After struggling through this highly educated work, I am still not quite sure'.[90] Marghanita Laski commented with more seriousness on what she viewed as the 'dangerous argument' of *Wives Who Went to College*, which played into the hands of those who saw no justification for state-subsidized higher education unless female graduates, like male ones, delivered a return on the investment through subsequent paid work. 'Far better to rely', Laski wrote,

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[82] 'Children or Career', *Daily Mirror*, 19 Feb. 1958, 16. For Gavron's media work before publication of *The Captive Wife*, and subsequent media coverage, see Gavron, *Woman on the Edge of Time*, 152, 166–7.

[83] 'Mum Analyses 1000 Bluestockings', *Hampstead and Highgate Express*, 14 Sept. 1957.

[84] Gertrude Williams, 'The Marriage Rate and Women's Employment', Fawcett Lecture delivered at Bedford College, University of London, 3 Nov. 1966, 4.

[85] Hubback, *From Dusk to Dawn*, 139.

[86] See review of media coverage in 'Working Wives', *Personnel Management*, Mar. 1960, 12–13.

> on an argument about basic human rights, to argue that those intelligent women who have already made the normal human contribution of bearing children . . . have the right to demand of society the conditions

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[87] See, for example, reviews in *New Statesman*, 28 Sept. 1957, *Church of England Newspaper*, 25 Oct. 1957, *Nursery World*, 17 Oct. 1957: WL, LSE, Papers of Judith Hubback, 7JUH/1.

[88] For background to this debate, see Spencer, *Gender, Work and Education in Britain*, ch. 1.

[89] Letter from Agatha M. Hosking, *Times*, 26 Apr. 1954, 7.

[90] 'Marjorie Proops Lectures on the Love Life of a Female Egg Head!', *Daily Mirror*, 25 Sept. 1957, 12. See also Cynthia Rhodes, 'Is College Wasted on Your Daughter?', *Sunday Express*, 22 Sept. 1957: clipping in WL, LSE, Papers of Judith Hubback, 7JUH/4, scrapbook 1.

> of their own full development, the conditions in which their talents, whether immediately and obviously useful to society or not, shall not be lodged useless in themselves.[91]

It was striking how many commentaries adopted a similar line, meeting Hubback's argument about 'wasted talents' with a defence of the intrinsic value of higher education to the individual: 'It is worthwhile for its own sake', the *Economist* leader argued, 'even if it never led to the earning of a single penny. It is a basic right of the individual that his or her mind should be developed as far as it proves itself capable of extension'.[92]

Klein's work also acquired meanings that its author could not control as it entered a wider discursive realm. Her *Working Wives* survey covered a range of subjects, including women's motives for working, types of employment and childcare arrangements, but tabloid coverage overwhelmingly focused on the data which appeared to suggest that opposition among husbands was relatively limited. The *Daily Mirror* reported this under the headline 'The Wives Who Work: They Are Happier. So Are Most Husbands', while the *Daily Mail*, picking up on fluctuations between different income brackets, made it a story about marital power relations and class.[93] 'Every day', the journalist Shirley Flack noted, 'more and more executive-type husbands send their wives out to work. And it's the perspiring labourer, stripped down to his singlet, drilling a hole in the road who clings to the belief that the little woman's place is in the home'.[94] The *Evening Standard* turned the story into a comic cartoon: a middle-class husband is pictured reading a newspaper bearing the headline 'Working Wives Make Marriage Happier' while his wife speaks into the telephone: 'Oh Mummy! I said I'd get a job to help our marriage and he said there were great opportunities in the Colonies!'[95]

What is clear from this brief analysis of the media reaction to Hubback and Klein's works is that their research could be framed in multiple ways, be it as a contribution to debates about the purpose of women's higher education or as an insight into domestic power struggles in the age of companionate marriage.[96] Newspaper features about working wives and mothers rarely projected consistent, coherent messages about gender. Editors frequently printed the views of 'ordinary' readers or members of the public alongside sociological findings. Sometimes these personal testimonies and sociological narratives were mutually reinforcing: a 60-year-old working-class housewife from Kent, for example, wrote to the *Daily Mirror* in full support of Klein's conclusions: 'I worked for forty years of my married life and felt better and happier for it', she confided. 'A job keeps you fit in body and mind'.[97] But in other cases the vox pop, whose very journalistic purpose was to convey a diversity of viewpoints, undermined sociological claims that paid work met women's deep-seated psychic needs. Two of the four working wives featured in the *Mirror*'s piece on Klein's survey attested to the pleasure they derived from their jobs, but the others were more equivocal: the bus conductress Esther Russo said that her job alleviated boredom but she planned to resign and 'settle down and have a family' as soon as was financially possible. Joan Taylor, a 26-year-old server in a tobacco kiosk, didn't like working but had no choice: 'We have been given notice to quit our home, and we must save to buy another one'.[98]

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[91] Marghanita Laski, 'Frustrations of the Graduate Housewife', *Observer*, 27 Oct. 1957, 10.

[92] 'Labour Lost by Love', *Economist*, 26 June 1954, 1036.

[93] 'The Wives Who Work', *Daily Mirror*, 4 Jan. 1960, 5.

[94] 'The Surprising Thing about TOP MEN'S WIVES . . .', *Daily Mail*, 4 Jan. 1960, 6.

[95] *Evening Standard*, 6 Jan. 1960: clipping in VK, 9/1. See also Claud Morris's piece on Zweig's *Woman's Life and Labour*, which dwelt upon the theme of the domestic subordination of men with working wives and, unlike Zweig, disapproved of this phenomenon: 'What? My Wife Go Out to Work?', *Daily Mirror*, 28 Apr. 1952, 2.

In this kind of press coverage, pre-war ideas about married women's work, which framed it as a regrettable necessity for families under economic pressure, frequently intermingled with post-war formulations shaped by the new material reality of rising living standards. The idea that working wives were victims of a male breadwinner's meanness and that a 'good' husband allowed his wife to stay at home died hard. 'Houseproud' of Doncaster, for instance, confessed she would 'rather be single than slave at two jobs just to put money in my husband's pocket. Fortunately he allows me to stay at home and get on with the housework'.[99] In other cases, older sentiments about women's 'duty' to the home fused with psychoanalytical theories of maternal deprivation and moral anxieties about the acquisitiveness encouraged by affluence. This was a particular feature of religious commentary. In 1953 the *Daily Express* reported the bishop of Derby's warning to mothers not to fall for the 'seductive lure of the wage packet', while in 1956 the paper quoted the disapproving words of Mrs Geoffrey Fisher, wife of the archbishop of Canterbury: 'Mothers have allowed their pursuit of money to drive them into factories, shops and other work', she said, 'and let them leave their children without a mother's love and understanding'. This was a kind of Christian anti-consumerism tinged with Bowlby, the implication being that mothers were spoiling their children with toys and televisions when all they really needed was her loving presence.[100]

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[96] For the latter, see Helen McCarthy, 'Women, Marriage and Paid Work in Post-War Britain', *Women's History Review*, Feb. 2016, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09612025.2015.1123023> (accessed 7 July 2016).

[97] *Daily Mirror*, 6 Jan. 1960, 4.

[98] 'The Wives Who Work: They Are Happier. So Are Most Husbands', *Daily Mirror*, 4 Jan. 1960, 5.

[99] *Daily Mirror*, 6 Jan. 1960, 4. See also Jean Mann, 'Should Married Women Go Out to Work? The Penalties and the Awards', *Marriage Guidance*, i (1955).

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Sociological ideas about women's work did not, therefore, displace all other popular narratives about the employment of wives and mothers. But nor did they represent simply one discourse circulating among many others. What sociologists had on their side was the authority of 'facts'. Their ideas commanded attention and demanded acceptance because they were rooted not in 'prejudice' or unthinking stereotypes but in empirical research which provided 'a factual basis for discussion'.[101] Such research could be invoked by sympathetic journalists to counter public criticism of married women's work. In 1960 Eleanor Harvey referenced Klein's working wives survey and Jephcott's Bermondsey study in a long feature in the popular women's monthly *Modern Woman*, in which she defended paid work for married women as a vital contribution to the economy and a protection for wives against nervous breakdown.[102] In 1966 Anne Batt cited Klein's data in the *Daily Express* to illustrate that

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[100] 'Mothers Told, "Don't Work"', *Daily Express*, 27 Mar. 1953, 3; 'The Domestic Revolution', *Daily Express*, 2 Jan. 1956, 3.

[101] Jephcott, *Married Women Working*, 19.

[102] Eleanor Harvey, 'Guilty Wives', *Modern Woman*, Apr. 1961, 55–6.

married women's attendance record was as good as, or even better than, that of single female employees.[103]

Furthermore, social science endowed its practitioners with an 'expert' status which could be directed against rival claims to expertise; when the *Daily Mail* reported the disapproving remarks of the veteran youth worker and magistrate Basil Henriques on the subject of working mothers in February 1961, it printed a response from Klein under the headline 'Sir Basil Blames Working Mothers. Dr Violet [*sic*] Retorts: No Proof They Cause Child Crime'.[104] Klein's riposte against Henriques referenced a longer piece written for *Family Doctor*, a glossy magazine published by the British Medical Association for a mass female audience. In it she set out the evidence for and against claims that working mothers caused emotional harm to their children. Citing her own research to show that few such mothers had children below school age, she critiqued the psychoanalytic data on juvenile delinquency and concluded on a cautious but reassuring note: 'In each individual situation the pros and cons will have to be weighed carefully against each other. In this calculation it is as well to remember that there is no simple black-and-white picture, as is often assumed'.[105]

This attempt to dampen the moral fervour excited by the subject of working wives and mothers was the most significant contribution that the post-war sociologists of women made to public debates about gender, family and work. This was achieved not just by producing reliable evidence to counter Bowlbyist claims or to discredit employers' prejudices, but by constructing a larger narrative that established married women's work across social classes as a normal and permanent feature of modern societies. This was evident in Harvey's *Modern Woman* feature, which framed its argument in terms of women's changing material aspirations and psychic needs and the popularity of the dual role model. It was because of the 'emotional and financial rewards' of paid work, she wrote, that 'the pattern of modern marriage is assuming a clear, definite outline. A woman works after marriage until the arrival of her

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[103] Anne Batt, 'Please Can I Have My Sex Appeal Back?', *Daily Express*, 28 Oct. 1966, 10.

[104] *Daily Mail*, 23 Feb. 1961, 11.

[105] Viola Klein, 'When Mum Goes Out to Work', *Family Doctor*, Mar. 1961, 155–7.

first child, then stops at home for the next twelve to fourteen years while her children are young'.[106]

An even more striking example of the reproduction and endorsement of this sociological narrative can be found in the long piece that the journalist and former Labour member of parliament Lena Jeger wrote in *The Guardian* in 1962, prompted by the publication of *Married Women Working*. 'How much longer will it be before society recognises that it cannot do without the work of married women?' Jeger asked:

> One of the most important single facts of the present social revolution is that her labour and her skill are indispensable. She is now a permanent part of the employment pattern, not an emergency wartime substitute, not a cheap labour alternative in depression years. But the resistance to accepting this fact is persistent, hard, and irrational.[107]

Jeger reinforced this assertion by noting that the LSE study was based firmly on facts (although perhaps tellingly the author she named in her piece was not Jephcott but Titmuss), and proceeded to run through the major demographic, socio-economic and cultural trends behind the rise in married women's work. She summarized the Bermondsey findings and concluded:

> The underlying thought in this book is that the time has more than come to stop arguing about whether married women should work and to find out instead what can be done to use their labour to the best advantage and at the same time reduce the strains upon them.[108]

In short, she called for a debate traditionally framed in moral terms to be reconfigured as one in which married women's work was accepted as a given.

VI

Working mothers would remain a controversial subject throughout the rest of the twentieth century. But for those who wished to defend this group, the post-war sociology of women offered a compelling framework through which to do so. Did this reframing of popular discourses have any traceable institutional consequences? Is there evidence that sociological knowledge made certain courses of action for policy makers, employers and women themselves more possible, or more likely, and others less so? This article cannot offer an exhaustive account of the impact of the post-war studies, but instead closes with two brief case studies. They have been selected because through them we are able to see, in clear and concrete terms, how social research about women could be directly mobilized to advance different organizational agendas with different ideological effects.

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[106] Harvey, 'Guilty Wives', 55.

[107] Lena Jeger, 'Women Talking', *Guardian*, 4 June 1962, 6.

[108] *Ibid.*

The first is the enthusiastic embrace by members of the BFUW of the dual role as advocated by Myrdal, Klein and Hubback. Founded in 1907 and affiliated to the International Federation of the same name, the BFUW was the major institutional voice for graduate women in Britain.[109] Klein had been a regular speaker at local BFUW gatherings since the publication of *Women's Two Roles* but became closely connected to the organization in the early 1960s while researching the problems faced by professional women. She was in frequent touch with the BFUW leadership in this period, advising on various draft reports and documents, and in 1963 she joined its Working Party on the Occupational Outlook for Graduate Women.[110] She played a significant role in shaping the research project conducted by this committee and in overseeing the publication in 1966 of *Graduate Women at Work*.[111] Based on 1,529 replies to a postal survey organized through local branches, this report provided a serious sociological insight into the lives of graduate women, from patterns of marriage, family size, education, training and employment to the more subjective matter of 'the incentives which urge them to return to work in later life and the difficulties which deter them from doing so'.[112] In addition, Klein analysed ninety-one diaries kept by working mothers over the course of a fortnight, contributing a chapter to the report on the factors enabling women to combine home life and paid work successfully.[113] The BFUW hoped that, as well as capturing facts, the survey findings would send a message to younger women that 'being wives and mothers and also members of a profession need not necessarily be conflicting. What some have done, others can do'.[114] Furthermore, it sought to collect information on regional patterns in training and employment opportunities that would be useful to their members and effective in making 'a case for action to the Government'.[115]

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[109] J. H. Sondheimer, *History of the British Federation of University Women, 1907–1957* (London, 1957).

[110] Klein to Constance Arregger, 29 Nov. 1962: VK, 6/4; Klein to Miss Almond, 31 July 1963: VK, 13/1.

[111] See Klein to Arregger, 8 Aug. 1963, 28 Apr. 1964: VK, 7/2.

[112] Arregger (ed.), *Graduate Women at Work*, p. xvi (editor's intro.).

[113] Klein wrote about her findings for a wider audience in 'A Double Life', *Manchester Guardian*, 30 Oct. 1964, 10.

With an 82 per cent response rate, the survey evidently hit on a subject close to the hearts of BFUW members. It was the same story with the 'patterns of womanpower' study that Klein happened to be working on simultaneously, supported by the BFUW's Parliamentary and Public Relations Committee. Klein's questionnaire, which was distributed via BFUW branches, elicited over a thousand replies. 'They continue to come in at the rate of about a dozen a day', she wrote to the BFUW secretary in May 1963; 'many of the respondents send me long and interesting comments and some write letters of many pages'.[116] This interest in social research was part of a wider trend among professional women's organizations. The Medical Women's Federation, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, the Association of Headmistresses and the Association of Part-Time Social Workers all surveyed their memberships and published reports during this period.[117] Most identified the same desire for part-time work that Hubback had highlighted back in the mid 1950s and bore witness to the problems of inflexible employers and lack of 'refresher' training courses. These issues subsequently moved to the centre of campaigning work by these and other bodies. Books like *Women's Two Roles* and *Wives Who Went to College* did not create these campaigns, but they offered a credible intellectual framework adding empirical ballast to their demands.

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[114] Arregger (ed.), *Graduate Women at Work*, p. xvii (editor's intro.).

[115] British Federation of University Women to local associations, Circular No. 2, 11 Sept. 1963: VK, 7/2.

[116] Klein to Kathleen Johnston, 7 May 1963: VK, 6/2. Replies to the questionnaire are in VK, boxes 26–9. She does not appear to have published her findings, but see Klein, 'The Motivation to Work', typescript, 1968: VK, 2/4.

[117] Jean E. Lawrie, Muriel L. Newhouse and Patricia M. Elliott, 'Working Capacity of Women Doctors', *British Medical Journal*, 12 Feb. 1966; Margot Jefferys and Patricia M. Elliott, *Women in Medicine: The Results of an Inquiry Conducted by the Medical Practitioners' Union in 1962–63* (London, 1966). The National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, *The Changing Pattern* (London, 1966); Association of Headmistresses and Association of Assistant Mistresses, *An Enquiry into the Recruitment of Married Women Graduates to Teaching: The Problems and Possibilities* (London, 1961); Phyllis Wilmott, 'The Part-Time Social Worker', typescript, 1963: VK, 17/1.

Testament to this was the evidence on graduate employment heard by Lord Heyworth's committee on university appointments boards in 1963, at which Klein was present. She noted with satisfaction in a letter to Myrdal that *Women's Two Roles* was 'quoted over and over again by various speakers'. The secretary of Cambridge University's appointments board, she reported, 'referred to it as her "bible"'.[118]

Klein's collaboration with the BFUW thus demonstrates how sociological research could connect with women's lived experience and be deployed to advance causes, in this case professional employment and training opportunities for older married women. In a report compiled for the OECD and published in 1971, Nancy Seear suggested that this agenda had made progress in Britain, albeit against a wider picture of continuing occupational segregation and unequal pay.[119] Labour shortages in teaching, medicine and nursing, she noted, had prompted state investment in training for married women and greater flexibility of working hours, while further education colleges were experimenting with part-time courses in teaching and social work to cater for married women. In addition, some women were taking matters into their own hands by setting up specialist employment agencies for female graduates looking for part-time work. One Cambridge graduate and mother of two told *The Guardian* in 1962 that she had been 'stirred into action' after reading *Wives Who Went to College* and now spent her time matching older trained women to part-time job opportunities in London and the home counties.[120] The impact of these initiatives and the research informing them was undoubtedly limited; demands for flexibility in employment and training would continue to be heard in the 1970s and well beyond. But, nonetheless, the post-war sociologists made an important contribution to the framing of this agenda at its earlier point of genesis.

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[118] Klein to Alva Myrdal, 22 July 1963: VK, 15/4.

[119] B. N. Seear, *Re-Entry of Women to the Labour Market after an Interruption in Employment* (Paris, 1971).

[120] Joan Little, 'Professional Part-Timers', *Guardian*, 5 Sept. 1962, 6. See also the series of articles by Gina Watson on this subject in the *Manchester Guardian* in 1956: 'Part-Time Work for Mothers', 6 Feb., 4; 'Part-Time Work for Women: Some Evening Occupations', 10 Feb., 5; 'Part-Time Work for Women: The Care of Other People's Children', 12 Feb., 4.

VII

If this first case study offers evidence of research stimulating action, the second demonstrates how sociological knowledge could also legitimize inaction. As discussed above, the tendency of the dual role model was to obscure the needs of working mothers with children below school age. This omission had significance for the development of childcare policy in government. In late 1961, the Women's Consultative Committee of the Ministry of Labour, a body created during the Second World War and composed of women members of parliament and representatives of women's trade unions and occupational associations, began to consider the question of the care of children of working mothers, prompted by a resolution passed by the Women's Advisory Committee of the Trades Union Congress (TUC). To inform their discussion, civil servants compiled two papers for the committee: one setting out a historical and administrative account of policy provision in this area since the war, and the second, a condensed summary of existing research on the childcare arrangements of mothers who worked outside the home.[121] This second paper drew heavily on the Bermondsey study, whose findings were already familiar to the committee, Jephcott and Seear having personally attended one of its meetings in 1957, and an interim report of the study having been circulated to members in 1960. The paper also described the findings of Klein's two Institute of Personnel Management pamphlets and Zweig's *Worker in an Affluent Society*, published in 1961.

What lessons did the officials draw from the sociological research and present to the committee? Overall, the picture painted was reassuring: the paper emphasized that few mothers of under-fives went out to work, that mothers with children of all ages only sought employment if they could organize satisfactory childcare, and that there was little evidence of emotional or physical harm to children. In this respect, the effect was similar to that in the press discourses discussed earlier: the research helped to dampen anxieties and discredit those who opposed married women's employment on moral or speculative grounds. On the other hand, the research was interpreted in such a way as to endorse the state's entrenched position on the provision of pre-school day care. Since the closure of the war nurseries, publicly provided day care had been made available only to children in special categories; typically this included the children of single mothers and widows who were compelled to work out of financial necessity, or those from 'problem' homes. Under this regime, the state had no responsibility to provide care for children living in 'normal' family circumstances so as to enable their mothers to work.[122] In practice, provision varied between local authorities, with Labour-run councils such as Coventry more likely to adopt a 'pro-nursery' position than their Conservative counterparts.[123] Nonetheless, as Angela Davis has observed, the assumption that childcare was 'a private matter with the state only becoming involved in exceptional circumstances' shaped policy thinking across the political spectrum throughout the post-war decades and arguably into the 1990s.[124]

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[121] 'Care of Children of Working Mothers, WCC (R.5) 3, February 1962' and 'Care of Children of Working Mothers, WCC (R.5) 5, October 1962': TNA, LAB 8/2627.

The Bermondsey study was drawn upon to substantiate this position. The 'most favoured' form of childcare, the paper stated, was relatives, usually grandmothers, and very few mothers used or said that they wished to use day nurseries. In a stable working-class district like Bermondsey, the community could be relied upon to police itself through well-established moral norms. Here the paper quoted Jephcott directly:

> Bermondsey did not approve of the mother working if her child was under school age. From this stage on the decision was hers provided the minding was satisfactory . . . The more children the mother had, the less it was correct for her to work, partly because several children were held to be too much to ask of a minder, who was generally a relation or a friend.[125]

In other words, a self-regulating community system was imagined to be in operation: mothers only worked where they could make childcare arrangements acceptable to 'Bermondsey', and the childcare options on offer through family and neighbourhood determined whether and how much she could work. There was thus no case for government to intervene in such a well-functioning system, except in special cases where married women's labour was urgently required and where it could be reliably shown that the provision of nurseries would increase supply.

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[122] Jane Lewis, 'The Failure to Expand Childcare Provision and to Develop a Comprehensive Childcare Policy in Britain during the 1960s and 1970s', *Twentieth Century British History*, xxiv (2013).

[123] Angela Davis, *Pre-School Childcare in England, 1939–2010: Theory, Practice and Experience* (Manchester, 2015).

[124] *Ibid.*, 19.

[125] Jephcott, *Married Women Working*, 162, quoted in 'Care of Children of Working Mothers, WCC (R.5) 5'.

These conclusions were confirmed by the discussion that followed in the committee's meeting on 6 November 1962. The Conservative junior minister Willie Whitelaw, who was in the chair, introduced the item by stating that it seemed that there was no general problem; if local problems arose, the ministry would give all the help it could through its local offices.[126] The subsequent discussion dwelt on what it might be reasonable to ask employers to do by way of flexibility of hours and allowing mothers extra paid leave in cases of children's sickness; and whether Labour Exchange officials could reasonably enquire into a married woman's childcare arrangements before sending her to a job. The issue of state-provided or subsidized childcare was not on the table, to the disappointment of the TUC Women's Advisory Committee, which, at its 1963 conference, called for the minister to take 'a more positive attitude and not wait until a local need has been drawn to his attention — and proved — before discussing the extension of child-care facilities with the appropriate authorities'.[127]

The suggestion here is not that ministry officials wilfully misrepresented the sociological research. None of the proponents of married women's work clamoured for universal childcare provision, with most endorsing Bowlbyist prescriptions, at least in general terms, and limiting their recommendations to after-school and holiday club provision. Instead, what this episode uncovers is how sociological knowledge could become implicated in the bureaucratic construction and reproduction of conventional wisdoms about women's needs and preferences: conventional wisdoms which, in this case, inhibited policy action. In this respect, attending to the cultural throw of social science provides an illuminating perspective on one of the more curious facts about post-war Britain: the dramatic growth that took place in married women's employment without any major accompanying expansion of formal childcare provision.

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[126] Minutes of the Women's Consultative Committee, 6 Nov. 1962: TNA, LAB 8/2627.

[127] The conference did not, however, envisage these facilities being used by mothers of under-twos, who 'should not be urged to work — indeed they will not wish to do so unless forced by financial strain': see *Women Workers, 1963: Industrial Charter for Women and Report of the 33rd Annual Conference of Representatives of Trade Unions Catering for Women Workers* (London, 1963), 4–5.

VIII

What might be described as the 'normalization' of married women's employment was among the major social changes of the second half of the twentieth century, not only in Britain but across the developed world. New forms of sociological knowledge about women's orientations towards paid work and family were not the primary drivers responsible for this change; nonetheless, they played a crucial part in the necessary task of reframing the public meanings of women's labour so as to bring it about.

The purpose of this statement is not to restore texts like *Women's Two Roles* or *Wives Who Went to College* to feminist 'respectability', but rather to demonstrate the importance of taking ideas seriously in historical accounts of women's post-war lives. The sociologists of women were not innocent observers of demographic trends or shifts in the structure of labour markets, but sought to interpret change in particular ways. As Savage has noted, the idea of change itself was crucial to the explanatory power that social scientists more broadly claimed for themselves in this period, becoming 'an essential feature of their self-identity'.[128] This inevitably meant that groups whose work histories were less amenable to the narrative of the dual role's irresistible rise fell from view, while evidence of continuity in married women's work from earlier periods was obscured by accounts that privileged the mid twentieth century as a moment of transformation.

But to infer from this that the sociologists of women misread an objective 'reality' that can be independently recovered by historians with our superior analytical skills would be profoundly unhelpful. Their ideas had impact because they existed in dynamic interplay with women's lived experiences and helped women to make sense of those experiences. In this respect, these texts inhabit the realm of the 'intersubjective', where scholars must attend, in Penny Summerfield's words, 'not only to the voice that speaks for itself, but also the voices that speak to it, and the discursive formulations from which understandings are selected and within which accounts are made'.[129] It is perhaps unsurprising that this dynamic relationship should be most visible among the articulate middle-class women surveyed by the BFUW and other organizations. Yet it seems unlikely that tabloid editors would have repeatedly run stories about Klein's *Working Wives* or Zweig's *Women's Life and Labour* had their ideas been deemed wholly irrelevant to the lives of ordinary female readers. This speculation finds indirect support in Elizabeth Roberts's classic oral history of post-war Lancashire, in which she observed that her working-class subjects were 'certainly influenced by changes in public attitudes to married women working outside the house for wages', adding without further comment: 'It is not suggested that respondents had read or even heard of the work of writers such as Viola Klein and Alva Myrdal, but some women acted as if they had'.[130]

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[128] Savage, *Identities and Social Change in Britain*, 20.

The relationship between social science and women's work changed again in the 1970s. A new wave of feminist sociology inspired by the Women's Liberation Movement made sexual divisions in the home and workplace its central analytical problem.[131] This occurred against the backdrop of social changes unforeseen by their post-war antecedents, including rising rates of divorce and cohabitation, growing numbers of working mothers with pre-school children, and the return of mass male unemployment. As deindustrialization and labour market restructuring continued apace in the 1980s, the optimism of those who believed the dual role gave women 'the best of both worlds' appeared increasingly naive. The task for social science, as some feminists saw it, was to raise the political consciousness of women workers and organize resistance through class struggle.[132]

Nonetheless, the ideas and approaches pioneered by the post-war sociologists of women did not simply disappear from the debate; one can identify, for example, important points of continuity and resonance in the emerging sociological scholarship on 'dual career couples' and the 'work–family relationship' over the same period.[133] Tracing this intellectual legacy beyond 1970, however, is not just an important task for disciplinary histories of social science or histories of feminist thought. It matters for wider social and cultural narratives of change because, as this article has sought to show, shifts in the conceptualization of women's work offer an illuminating lens through which to write the history of gender in the twentieth century. The ideas of the post-war researchers, and of those who came before and after, matter because they form a thread linking past to present through which we can track with greater clarity, depth and nuance what paid work has meant to women, and how those meanings have changed.

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[129] Penny Summerfield, *Reconstructing Women's Wartime Lives: Discourse and Subjectivity in Oral Histories of the Second World War* (Manchester, 1998), 15.

[130] Elizabeth Roberts, *Women and Families: An Oral History, 1940–1970* (Oxford, 1995), 125.

[131] See Diana Leonard Barker and Sheila Allen (eds.), *Sexual Divisions and Society: Process and Change* (London, 1976).

[132] Anna Pollert, *Girls, Wives, Factory Lives* (Basingstoke, 1981); Ruth Cavendish, *Women on the Line* (London, 1982).

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[133] See, for example, Michael Fogarty, Rhona Rapoport and Robert N. Rapoport, *Sex, Career and Family: Including an International Review of Women's Roles* (London, 1971); Rhona Rapoport and Robert N. Rapoport, *Dual-Career Families Re-Examined: New Integrations of Work and Family* (London, 1973); Peter Moss and Nickie Fonda (eds.), *Work and the Family* (London, 1980).